



Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

HISTORY OF THE WORKING CLASSES AND OF INDUSTRY IN FRANCE.¹

THE ROMAN PERIOD.

CASTING aside tradition and authority, and the theory of revelation and inspiration, and strictly following the inductive method of experiment and research, science has been enabled to change conditions of life to a degree hardly conceivable half a century ago.

Even the writing of history begins to undergo transformation. Even here the shovel and the pick-ax are undermining transmitted beliefs, turning libraries into waste heaps or bringing corroboration to discredited stories of the ancients by disentombed evidence of facts. It may, however, safely be charged that historical writers still confine themselves too exclusively to the great affairs of state. Wars and destruction are always more dazzling than construction and society building.

Investigation into the history of civilization of nations is only of recent date. Some important works, however, have been contributed in Germany, Austria, and France. Inama-Sternegg in his *Geschichte des Entstehens der grossen Grundherrschaften in der Karolinger Zeit* has given us material assistance in forming ideas as to development of modern society in the formative period of its history. But none of the authors that might be named—Waitz, Schmoller, Inama-Sternegg, in Germany and Austria; Daresté de la Chavanne, Duruy, Fustel de Coulanges, and D'Avenel in France; Thorold Rogers and Cunningham in England—throw more than side-lights on the life of the working classes and their development from a state of slavery up to their present position.

It was as early as the year 1858 that Mr. Émile Levasseur, then a man of thirty, published his *Histoire des classes ouvrières*. The work was the result of a call for a prize essay from the Academy of Moral and Political Science, and was received by this body and the critics of the press with the highest expressions of appreciation. In his report to the academy, August, 1858, M. H. Passy says: "Up to here [seventeenth century] nothing so complete has been published, nor has

¹Based on LEVASSEUR'S *Histoire des classes ouvrières en France depuis la conquête de Jules César jusqu'à la révolution*.

anything thrown so much light on the economic state of the provinces under the reign of Louis XIV."

A second competitive call by the Academy induced Mr. Levasseur to revise his work and to carry his investigations down to the present time, *i. e.*, to 1867. This work has been out of print for more than twenty years. Our author, busy with other work, was not able to devote his time to the efforts that a new edition such as he planned would entail. He was sent by the French government to America in 1893, on the occasion of the Columbian Exposition in Chicago, to study the industries and labor conditions of the United States. One volume treating of agriculture in the United States and two large volumes entitled *L'ouvrier Américain* give testimony of his erudition and penetration. A man so burdened with work at a time of life when mental strain falls heavy on the frame is scarcely expected to give the world shortly after the appearance of the two volumes of *L'ouvrier Américain* two new volumes in the second edition of his *Histoire des classes ouvrières et de l'industrie en France avant 1789*. These two volumes are not a new edition of an old work, but a completely rewritten work. It follows the old lines, as is self-evident, but otherwise has little more to remind one of the first edition than the more general historical facts that make the skeleton of the two works. The size of the work is fully three times that of the early edition, and this alone shows the character and completeness of the recast and the amplitude of the researches of the author. The two volumes of the *Histoire des classes ouvrières* contain about 1,700 large octavo pages. But Mr. Levasseur had his eye for a number of years on this recast of his first achievement in the world of letters and was accumulating data with this object in mind. When he came to carry out his long-intended plans, the chief work, the work of the investigator, was done.

In order to understand modern conditions and institutions we have to understand the Middle Ages from which they have sprung. In order to understand the Middle Ages we have to understand the time and the institutions on which they stand. Writers treat with easy contempt the question of a bottom for the tortoise, upon which stands the elephant, who, according to Hindoo lore, carries the world. The events of the period give them sufficient grounds upon which to develop theories and build the structure which for us represents the history of the Middle Ages. Mr. Levasseur found it necessary to go deeper, and to discover, if possible, a footing for his tortoise solid enough to carry all the burdens he has on his back. This he finds in

the institutions of Rome, to which he takes his readers in the initial chapters of his history.

France, like England, lived for five centuries under Roman institutions. In England the Briton withdrew to the western part of the island, and the towns and institutions disappeared with those that had supported them. In France this was different. In the southern provinces especially Roman institutions prevailed for many a century under Frank and Visigoth. But Provence was laid waste by the religious fervor of the thirteenth century, and Guienne, far superior in wealth and culture to any other part of France north of the Garonne, continued in its ancient institutions to the time of its destruction by the savagery of the English invaders under the Black Prince. The importance of inquiring into labor and industrial conditions in Rome and the provinces becomes evident. But we should get lost in the maelstrom of events, were we to follow this current alone. We have other forces to consider that were equally powerful in the forming of mediæval France and mediæval Europe in general, *i. e.*, the contributions by the Germanic conquerors to the social fabric. Only by giving to each of these contributive forces its full share of influence is it possible to present a picture that will do justice to the theme. Our author leaves some gaps open in this part of his narrative, which might be filled by matter supplied by writers of German nationality, of whom a thoroughgoing example is Inama-Sternegg in the work mentioned above.

The origin of Rome determined the organization of its government: an aristocracy based on an agricultural community in constant readiness for war. But such were all the city-states of antiquity. Even Athens confined the ample rights of democratic government to the full citizens, of whom, according to Boeckh, there were but 20,000 in a population of 400,000. (Wallon, revising Boeckh and Letronne's estimate, puts the free population at 67,000 of whom only about half, however, were citizens in a total of 310,000.) A city which from its start has to stand sword in hand on the defensive against its neighbors has the form and organization of its government pressed on it. Even had it not been the tendency all through antiquity, Rome would have encouraged agriculture and considered commerce and industry as of a degrading character. It remains a proof of the high patriotism of the Roman citizen that he was always ready to give his life to the defense of the city, and even be led beyond the confines of Italy when the security of Rome demanded it. Though the patrician looked with

contempt upon the plebeian, and oppressed as the latter was, the plebs were endowed with political rights. They exercised the right of suffrage, and all important questions of state had to be submitted to the vote of the tribes. In many a sanguinary contest the plebeians wrung from the patricians concessions which finally made their representative, the tribune, almost of supreme power in the state. But there was cause enough for the exercise of the highest degree of courage and patriotism, even under the limitation of rights in the earlier centuries of the city. *Vae victis* could truly be said of the people of a conquered city. When milder views sheathed the sword which formerly had been their doom, still slavery and certainly the loss of all popular rights was the unavoidable lot of the inhabitants. The city and its territory was the state. It extended to the line of territorial dominion of the next adjoining city. The *ager publicus* had to feed the people collected within the protecting walls of the city. That the possession of land was highly valued and would give cause for continued contest under stress of growing population is but natural. The patricians who had been able to absorb an unreasonable amount of the public domain insisted on their privileges even after conquest had considerably extended its limits. The city by its situation was forced to adopt a humane course toward those it subjected to its rule. The kings appreciated this more readily than the people. The latter, the first comers, would have been better pleased with the enforcement of the ruder principles of war. But Rome needed men able to take up arms. She was ill served with slaves. They would have been serviceable enough in the cultivation of the newly conquered territory enlarging the public domain. The patricians' aim lay in this direction. The example of Cincinnatus, Regulus, and other eminent leaders shows that in the struggling days of the Republic the institution of slavery had not been sufficiently dominant to affect the rugged simplicity of life of the agriculturalist tending his own acre, even in those considered worthy of the exercise of dictatorial power. Sabina and Alba Longa bordered so closely on Rome that they were easily absorbed in the new city. The new inhabitants shared equal rights with the Roman plebs. The walls of the more distant cities of Latium, if it came to war, were razed and the lands added to the public domain. The inhabitants were transferred to the Roman city with citizens' rights if they submitted peacefully, as slaves if their city was taken by the sword. But these slaves soon were raised to the position of clients, and the clients gradually became citizens. As former slaves they were debarred from car-

rying arms. Their number exceeded that of the citizens. But Rome needed men, men capable of bearing arms. The reform of Servius Tullius supplied this want by giving this right to this new class of citizens.

One of the earliest institutions we meet in the Roman civic complex are the colleges, corporations or unions in our parlance, into which the people formed themselves for mutual assistance and protection. Plutarch says that Numa Pompilius divided the plebs into nine bodies, according to the following professions and trades: music, precious-metal work, building, dyeing, footgear, leather, common metals and armors, pottery, the ninth embodying all the other unenumerated trades. Servius Tullius, we are told by Florus, inscribed on the register of the census the people in classes, decuries, and colleges according to station and trade.

We must not be misled by this, however, into the belief that Rome under the kings was a society that looked kindly on handicraft, or possessed any highly developed industries. Livy is authority for the statement that Tarquin, when he wanted to build the temple of Jupiter, had to bring workmen from Etruria.

During the first centuries of its existence Rome was continuously in a virtual state of siege. The enemy was all the time before the gates, if not in regular war, at least in the shape of robber bands organized for pillage and destruction. One day the Veians, another day the Samnites appeared. To put on armor and man the walls was the immediate pressing necessity, cutting short the business of the Forum and closing the shops as well. Only those virtues were recognized which produced soldiers. Agriculture alone was a competent occupation. Many writers are quoted who hold that trade and commerce disqualified from Roman citizenship. Certain it is that they were held in contempt. It is not likely that a very large class of inhabitants were devoted to their exercise. In the general poverty and simplicity of an agricultural community every household produced the principal part of its sustenance. In the enumerations under the kings no mention is found of carpenters, bakers, butchers or weavers. Levasseur says this is probably because the greater part of the families lived off the products of their fields and the Roman matron wove the material for the clothes and baked the bread for the sustenance of the family. Pliny tells us that the college of bakers was not created before the year 580, *i. e.*, 175 B. C.

The prejudice against handicraft and trade survived the time of

political necessity that gave it birth. Cicero wrote to his son that all those who lived by mercenary labor followed a degrading occupation, and that no noble sentiment could ever be born in a shop. Later, under the empire, Seneca was indignant at a writer daring to attribute to the philosophers the invention of the arts. "These belong," he said, "to the vilest of slaves. Wisdom inhabits higher elevations, she does not form hands to labor, she directs the souls."

This was the general view and characterized conditions in the ancient world. There was, however, one exception. Mr. Levasseur does not give it mention, but it deserves a place in a history of labor, on account of the influence it was to exercise on the formation of a new world. It requires only to set the views and teachings of the Hebrew fathers, the framers of the Talmud, against those of the classic writers of antiquity to understand that a world-wide significance underlay the antagonism they display. The triumphant march of the Cross and of the Crescent is explained by the attitude of these two religions toward the laboring man and the poor. But both draw their inspiration—the former directly, the latter perhaps more indirectly—from the life-practices of the Hebrew commonwealth and the teachings of its directing minds. In that country, a mere speck on the map, of mostly arid soil, whose population probably never exceeded a million, devoid of any considerable commerce, the accumulation of wealth was an impossibility. Hard work and frugal living was the lot of all but a very few. The only badge of distinction was learning and knowledge. "A learned man, even if a bastard, passes before the high priest who is ignorant." Of all men the teacher was revered. Irreverence to a man of learning, to a teacher, was in the nature of a crime. Still the practice of learning not accompanied by the exercise of a trade was not considered as entitled to any merit whatsoever. Study without labor, it was held, made man one-sided. Labor without study made man a clown. The learned man devoted to labor with his hands was kept in contact with his fellow-man and made more charitable and susceptible of sympathy with his poorer brethren. The combining of the two, learning and work, alone made the perfect man.

We read of Rabbi Jochanan and several other eminent men as shoemakers; of Rabbi Isaac, a blacksmith; of Rabbi Pinchus, a stone-cutter, becoming high priest; of Papa, a gardener and brewer. Hillel, the elder, was a woodcutter; Shammaï, a builder; Rabbi Meïr, a copyist. A day laborer, a tanner, a goldsmith, a surveyor, a carpenter, a tailor, a laundryman, and a shepherd even, were distinguished men in

learning and in the law. From such soil alone could the carpenter of Nazareth, the fishermen of Galilee, the tent-maker of Tarsus spring. Here alone men of lowly callings could develop, able to cope with the doctors of the law and the erudites of Grecian civilization. Where two civilizations built on such opposing principles come in contact, a contest must arise in which the one making for the highest ideals must finally triumph.

With this brief statement of the views concerning labor and the working classes, nurtured in the Jewish commonwealth and soon to be carried into the contest by the preachers of the gospel, we can resume the thread of Mr. Levasseur's story.

If labor for wages conveyed a badge of dishonor, what could be its position after the victorious arms of Rome had destroyed her rival and only formidable antagonist, Carthage? We see free labor pressed everywhere by the labor of slaves. Marius still found his most devoted adherents in the colleges referred to above. Catiline endeavored to obtain the support of artisans and manumitted slaves, but the Senate decreed the dissolution of the colleges with the exception of those of workers in wood and metals and of the cultivators of the soil. The workingmen had their rights of association returned to them or taken away again, and again restored as this or that faction came to power, the democratic faction leaning on the plebs and the aristocratic faction fearing it. The colleges were at all times the seats of agitation. In them the ambitious had a ready auditory for the presentation of his claims. They were the seat of strife and agitation, not infrequently leading to bloody contests, even under the empire. When Pliny was governor of Bithynia, a fire having destroyed a great part of Nicomedia, he asked the permission of Trajan for the organization of a *collegium fabrorum* of 150 members to put in charge of the pumping engines. Trajan refused his consent, saying it would be better to get the necessary engines without creating under any pretext whatsoever associations which would very soon develop into hetairies. We see Septimius Severus and other emperors extend again the right of forming associations, sparingly and for special functions, as for instance funeral and similar benevolent objects. Where there is so much fear there must be danger behind the body that instils the fear. Repressed as the working classes were and degraded as was their position, they must have wielded power enough through the medium of the fear they inspired to make their rulers mindful of their position and solicitous in a measure for their welfare. This fear which the working classes

were able to inspire is remarkable in the face of the spread of slavery, which necessarily still more depressed free labor than before the conquests that laid the countries in the basin of the Mediterranean at the feet of Rome.

Luxury and profligacy now took the place of austere and abstemious living. But the workingman who had borne the brunt of the battles profited little by the victories. Slaves inundated Rome. Crassus, and other great slaveholders with him, organized their slaves into trades and hired them out for pay, deriving a larger income from this traffic than from their estates. Pliny tells us of one Caecilius Iso-taurus who, having lost a great part of his fortune during the civil wars, still on his death left, besides his other possessions, slaves to the number of 4,116. The servile wars prove the place slavery had taken, and the danger and menace it conveyed, not alone to free labor, but to the state itself. It was estimated that the population of Italy was three slaves to one freeman.

Gradually more humane tendencies began to ameliorate the conditions of the slave. From the middle of the second century of our era we see the Senate occupy itself with their condition. Manumissions were frequent. Besides, slavery among the Romans differed from the most recent example witnessed under our eyes in that the slaves were brought from countries of a higher civilization to one of a lower civilization. Among them were philosophers, artists, educated men of all classes, besides an innumerable host of men able to adorn the house and produce the various objects for which the luxurious living of the new era created a demand, but which the crude handicraftsmen of the city were scarcely able to supply. Slaves were employed in the most confidential capacities, including the education of children. All of this had a softening influence. Still, unless compared with the cruel lot of the agricultural slave, theirs was a hard one. Their progress from a state of slavery, without any property rights or rights to their nearest kin, toward one of serfdom, with rights of personal property and of family connections, was a progress of the highest importance, preparing the ground for the modern state, which we have seen developing only in the nineteenth century—the state built on the broadest possible basis, of equal rights of all citizens under self-made laws.

GAUL UNDER THE ROMANS.

When Cæsar conquered Gaul, the southern part was partly civilized, while the north was still subject to the crude conditions under

which the old Celts lived. Lyons, Marseilles, Narbonne, under the influence of Greek settlers, had long been centers of civilization from which, under the benign influence of industry and trade, objects of commerce were carried into the interior and there exchanged for the cruder products of the aboriginal Celt.

The exports to Italy soon became numerous. Hogs, salt pork, live animals, wool, and wine were the prominent articles. In spite of the edict of Domitian prohibiting the extension of new plantations, the cultivation of the vine prospered. It is doubtful whether it was Greek or Celt who first hit upon the expedient of adulterating wines. Columella speaks of the habit of the Allobroges of giving their wines a particular taste by the admixture of pitch, and Pliny says that the merchants of Narbonne colored them by the use of aloe and other more objectionable ingredients. The flour of Gaul was esteemed for bread-making by the Romans.

But industrial production was by no means neglected. Cæsar found that the Gauls made a good quality of iron in small furnaces. At Bibracte a species of glazed pottery was produced, and iron and other metals were worked on the anvil. Tacitus, speaking of the Germans, mentions a woollen cloak which the men wore, and the linen garments of the women which they wore in the habit of ornamenting with red bands. Pliny represents the whole of Gaul as practicing the wearing of linen. Schmoller (*Die Strassburger Tucher- und Weber-Zunft*) says that the influence of Gaul on the linen industry must have been far-reaching, as the old renowned Syrian linen factories produced linen gowns in the shape of the Gallic cloak with a hood. In Pliny's time Italy drew its supply of sail cloth from Gaul and Germany.

The Santones supplied the Romans with a heavy woollen cloth for outside wear. The Nervians and Atrebatæ, inhabiting the Belgium of today, produced not only woollen stuffs for ordinary clothing, but for the luxurious taste of the rich. (Schmoller.)

The production of materials for purposes of clothing was probably one of the chief industrial occupations. Arras and its neighborhood were even then a principal seat of this industry. Fulling and weaving were practiced by the same hand, and the art of dyeing was conducted with a certain degree of perfection. I found on the northwest coast of Ireland the peasant women spinning and weaving the wool of their mountain sheep into cloth and dyeing it with the lichens which they gather from the rocks. They make this homemade cloth into

clothes for themselves and the members of their families. An article of dress worn by all in rough weather is exactly the same as the one described by Mr. Levasseur—"a sort of cloak, a long pelisse with a hood attached, worn by slaves and the common people." The twentieth century is not so very far from the first century if we go to the forgotten islands of population that have been left undisturbed by the inroads of new peoples and ideas, which have changed man and his surroundings in most countries of Europe. We find soap and glass mentioned. Mr. Levasseur thinks, however, that the more pretentious pieces discovered were imported. A great number of household and kitchen utensils in earthenware, iron, and bronze, and even in silver, have been found, which speak of a certain skill and taste.

Pottery was an extensive article of manufacture. Glazing colors were employed, mostly red, but changing with black and white. In nearly all the provinces red lamps and vases have been found designated by the Romans under the name of *Aretine* pottery. Most of these objects were made in molds with ornaments in relief. They were not great objects of art, nor were the statuettes, judging from the specimens found in *terra cotta*; still they speak of a certain art aim. The sculptured funeral stones show no greater perfection in art than was displayed in clay.

In the reign of Augustus and the Julian emperors the industrial progress was not very great. It was deemed essential to provide for necessities, to construct roads and build cities before thinking of adorning them. Under the reign of the Antonines, when wealth had been accumulating, the cities began to fill with elegant houses and other sumptuous edifices. Houses in the cities were decorated with paintings and ornaments. Mosaics were freely employed for floorings, many of which are preserved, particularly at Lyons, and testify to a considerable advance in art. The taste for this species of decoration was carried by the Romans into all the countries of their occupation. We find many rich examples in England. In Belgium the rich houses recalled in their pavements, their bas-reliefs, and frescoes the Pompeian style. Mr. Levasseur thinks the houses, suiting the climate, were provided with glass windows. The beautiful specimens of glass works exhibited in the South Kensington and other museums show that the Romans were adepts in this manufacture.

The country was dotted with beautiful and luxurious villas. But from the third century they began to assume the aspect of fortresses. May not this have been in consequence of the unrest and insurrections

of the rural slaves and country populations, which at one time threatened to overturn the whole civil structure? Mr. Levasseur alludes in a passing remark only to this terrible outbreak of fury of the down-trodden country population. In a history of the laboring classes it seems to deserve a more comprehensive treatment. The insurrection covered France, spread into Spain, where it broke out again and again with more or less force for the next century and a half, and was subdued in France, with difficulty, by the emperor Maximian exerting the full force of his legions. Gibbon gives us a picture of the state of the French peasantry which easily explains the phenomenon:

When Cæsar subdued the Gauls, that great nation was already divided into three orders of men — the clergy, thenobility, and the common people. The first governed by superstition, the second by arms, but the third and last was not of any weight or account in the public councils. It was very natural for the plebeians, oppressed by debt or apprehension of injuries, to implore the protection of some powerful chief who acquired over their persons or property the same absolute rights as, among the Greeks and Romans, a master acquired over his slaves. The greatest part of the nation was gradually reduced into a state of servitude; compelled to perpetual labor on the estates of the Gallic nobles, and confined to the soil, either by the real weight of fetters, or by the no less cruel and forcible restraints of the laws. During the long series of troubles which agitated Gaul, from the reign of Gallienus to that of Diocletian (253 to 285 A. D.), the condition of these servile peasants was peculiarly unbearable; and they experienced at once the complicated tyranny of their masters, of the barbarians, of the soldiers, and of the officers of the revenue.

This oppression did not prevent the growth of wealth and the development of a luxury, signs of which still meet our eye today. It explains the downfall of the empire under the onslaughts of hordes of barbarians, as this same separation of the masses from the classes explains the easy conquests of these very countries by the legions of the Roman republic. Before it came to the later consummation, Rome filled her important part in the progression of the nations from barbarism to civilization. Mr. Levasseur summarizes the position as follows: Gaul before the arrival of Julius Cæsar, Roman already in the Narbonnais, but barbaric in all parts lying beyond the Cevennes mountains, was touched by Roman civilization under Augustus, and under the Antonine emperors became one of the richest provinces of the empire. A very primitive industry and small urban population fifty years before the Christian era in long-haired Gaul; large cities, an active industry and commerce, artistic productions and monuments

testifying, if not to great artistic talent, at least to a remarkable development of economic life and luxury, characterize the second century. History has rarely seen a transformation so rapid in the aspect of a country and in the manners of a people. In accepting the municipal institutions and the civil law of the republic, Gaul organized in its cities its artisans and merchants on the model of Italy. She adopted likewise the laws and usages relating to slaves. Slavery, largely practiced before the conquest, was further extended under Roman dominion. The emperor Probus complains that, principally in the north, the country was being cultivated by German slaves. Still, this slavery seems not to have exercised on the artisan classes the depressing influence it might otherwise have done, because there were relatively fewer slaves in these city occupations in Gaul. From the end of the first century, the working classes, free or servile, though remaining Gallic by character and origin, were ruled entirely by Roman institutions. We find the record of Gaul in the laws and institutions of Rome.

In the third century the number of slaves had diminished considerably. War had ceased to bring to the slave market the myriads which formerly, at insignificant prices, had swelled the households of the rich. Birth had become the only source of increase. But even this was sapped by the numerous emancipations. The softening of manners, the progress of a humane spirit under the dominion of the stoic philosophy which ascended the imperial throne with the Antonines, the influence of Christianity, testamentary liberality, and sometimes even the interest of the owners, who sold the slaves their liberty, made emancipation quite frequent.

The growing scarcity of slaves and consequent high prices made their labor more expensive. The ranks of free labor became enlarged, and the lines between free and servile labor became less sharply drawn. Free labor and slave labor were frequently found employed jointly in the same work. At an early day it had been discovered that slave labor was economically disadvantageous. Terentius Varro states expressly that it was more profitable on difficult land to employ free labor than slave labor.

Notwithstanding all this, slavery down to the fall of the empire was the social condition of a great proportion of the laboring classes of Gaul. What this social status was is comprehensively stated by Mr. Levasseur, though with admirable brevity. I will restate here what these conditions were.

The man who had become a slave by conquest or by birth was considered a thing, *res*, but a thing of a particular kind to which law and custom had gradually extended certain rights. The slave had no political rights and for a long time no civil rights. Legally he was neither husband nor father, because his wife and children were, like himself, the property of the master. The woman was at times given to two men. For a long time the slave could neither transmit nor inherit property. If he was the author or the victim of a crime, the master was responsible for the damage; if he was called before a court of justice to furnish information, he was not on that account considered a witness. He was judicially represented by his master, who punished him and could even put him to death. He could be sold, and the formalities of a sale resembled those of a sale of land. He could be transferred or hired like a horse. The law of Roman slavery was applied to Gaul.

But, under the influences referred to, the master gradually lost his judiciary right and had to refer the culprit slave to the courts. He could be forced to sell the slave in case of cruelty. Antoninus decided that the killing of one's own slave was punishable like the killing of another's slave, and Constantine made the killing of a slave punishable equally with the murder of a free man. Marriage became recognized, and the slave could hold and transmit property. Stoicism and chiefly Christianity inspired the law prohibiting the separation by sale of husband, wife, and children. Christianity, teaching that all men are equals before God, tended to bring the slave and the master near one another morally.

It respected the institution which it found impossible to abolish, and which St. Augustine tried to explain as a consequence of original sin, but it counseled its amelioration. It counseled enfranchisement. Constantine legalized enfranchising before a bishop.

The liberated slave had by no means all the rights of a free man. Though possessed of the rights of a citizen toward others, he was still dependent so far as his former master was concerned. He took his name. He owed him obedience as a son to his father. He aided him with his body and his gains. He put himself at his service for a certain number of days, stipulated in the contract of enfranchisement, or left at the will of the patron, who made use of this right for his own purposes, or for obtaining a revenue by lending these services to others. The enfranchised slave who disengaged himself from these obligations could be re-enslaved. Law and custom from the time of the Antonines,

however, made many limitations to these obligations. The freedman could free himself entirely by the payment of a sum of money. The enfranchised condition ceased to be legally hereditary. The enfranchised classes had gradually mixed with all classes of society and become a considerable part of the rural and urban population and an important dependence of power of the great.

The rural slave, as a rule, was subject to harder treatment than the city slave. The villa, the estate, had its *familia rustica*, attending to the cultivation of the soil and the production of the necessary objects used on the farm. The supervision was exercised by the farmer and his wife (*villicus* and *villica*), themselves belonging to the servile classes. The slaves worked in gangs, and in the early Roman period wore chains. They were subjected to flagellation and imprisonment.

The farm produced, besides food and drink, utensils and implements in wood and iron, linen and woolen cloth, and clothing for the use of all the people living on it. But if the labor did not cost much, it also, as has been demonstrated by Mr. Fustel de Coulanges, produced little. This led to the custom of proprietors leasing their land to a farmer, also a slave, for a fixed part of the produce. This letting out of land, as a slave could not enter a fixed contract, had commenced already under the republic. But under the empire the custom became legally established by prohibiting the master to separate by sale or otherwise the *colon* from his holding. Neither could the *colon* leave the land to which he was attached. He was fixed on the land from father to son. This condition of enforced heredity extended likewise to a number of trades, chiefly those catering to alimentation. In Gaul the *colonat* had made great progress in the latter centuries of the empire by the fixing of barbarians on the land.

THE COLLEGES.

The colleges, suppressed under the early emperors as hotbeds of sedition and political agitation, later on were gradually revived. The Antonines granted certain rights of association for funereal and other charitable purposes. Alexander Severus and his successors encouraged them. It was found that they were a convenient medium for the satisfaction of the local ambition of the provincial town. They were easily supervised, and they served besides as a means of holding the workmen to their trades at a time when arms were wanted and tradespeople rather prone to leave their occupations.

Not only was it the care of the government to keep the trades

which furnished food and drink supplied with workmen, but the same held of all carrying trades on water and land. The college was considered a convenient means to this end. It gave many privileges and advantages, and in a number of ways flattered the vanity of members by its meetings and celebrations, processions and public gatherings, and imperial pageants. A record is still preserved of the number of seats reserved at the amphitheater of Nîmes for the rivermen of the Ardèche, the Rhône, and the Saône. It is mentioned by Mr. Levasseur as a proof of the high esteem in which the colleges of mariners were held.

Next in importance to the *nautae*, which included the river merchants as well as those engaged in river and land transportation, were smiths and building trades. Further enumeration is found of wool manufacturers, wine merchants, and even makers of silk blouses. The question whether the masters alone or their workmen likewise were members of the colleges is answered by the statement that there were only small masters and, probably, no large clientele of dependent workmen. Though division of labor is found to have been practiced to a large extent, it by no means implies the existence of what we call the great industry. The inscriptions are much rarer in other parts than the south, and disappear entirely in the north of France. Here Romanization was less active, and the old Gallic customs more persistently maintained themselves.

STATE REGULATION.

In the third and fourth centuries Rome had long ceased to be politically turbulent, but it could become a very dangerous spot when hungry. The chief care of its rulers was exercised in the task of providing food. The population is variously estimated between one million and a million and a half. The number of recipients of free rations, 200,000 under Augustus, rose to 320,000 under Septimius Severus. It required a million pounds of corn a day for this service alone. Aurelian changed this into supply of bread. The state being the purveyor for so large a number of hungry mouths, a numerous administration and an active supervision was required. The grains and the beeves had to be imported from distant provinces, the flour to be ground, the bread to be baked, the meat and all charged, and the distribution undertaken, without failing any day in the year on pain of compromising the safety of the state. This process acts with automatic regularity under free commerce, but becomes a difficult and complicated affair under authoritative regulation.

The *navicularii*, who had the transporting of all the means of subsistence in their hands, were endowed with special privileges. The spread of *latifundia* stopped the cultivation of Italian fields and turned them into grazing grounds. We have the same process exemplified in the England of today. The shipping men, to encourage their holding to their trade, were freed from the payment of taxes and the exercise of public duties. It was held that in braving the dangers of the sea in the work of provisioning the city they were engaged on public business. Constantine, Julian, Gratian, and Theodosius conferred on them the rank of knight after five years of service. But while they had privileges extended to them, the law was very severe in holding them to their trade and to a strict account for the property confided to their care. They were responsible for money intrusted to them. They were forbidden to deviate from the prescribed route or to stop too long at a given port, and were punished by death in certain cases for fraud and delays. In the Codex Theodosius it is stated that navicularies in years of dearth sold for their own account the grain put in their charge and bought it back at lower prices the year following, thus preventing the grain reaching those for whom it was intended at time of greatest need.

Since the free bread deliveries had superseded the corn delivery the baker's services were in great demand. In the olden times there were neither bakers nor millers. The hand-mill ground the corn into flour, and the hand that turned the mill baked the bread. Not before the fourth century of our era were water-mills introduced in Rome. But most of the bakers employed slaves and animals for turning the mill. The trade was encouraged by privileges granted to its members. After two years of service the bakers obtained quiritary rights. It is stated that high dignities were sometimes conferred on members of these trades. Some of the leading *caudicarii* of the Tiber and the chief hog merchants were honored after five years with the title of count, and it is known by a law of 364 that bakers were admitted to the Senate after retiring from their trade. But the inducements for leaving the trades seem to have been great enough to outweigh the favors granted to individuals and to the corporate bodies (colleges). Not alone were gangs organized to press men into the ranks to man the transports and handle the oars, but the son of a man engaged in shipping (naviculary) could neither retire his property nor his person from the service. *Sunt perpetuo navicularii*, says a law of the year 371. Forty years later it was decreed that search was to be made for the goods and

persons, and heirs of goods or persons, pertaining to the colleges of *navicularii* and to be brought back to their functions in order "to insure a regular provisioning of the very holy city (*sacratissimae urbis*), just pillaged by the Visigoths."

That the bakers fell under the same ban is what might be expected. The oven could not be permitted to grow cold. The son had to follow the trade of his father from his twentieth year or find a substitute, who was then perpetually attached to the trade. The son-in-law even was not free from the grip of the trade. If he had squandered the dowry of his wife divorce would not free him. He had to make good his obligations toward the college by perpetual service as baker. After five years a baker could free himself if he could furnish a substitute. But if he neglected his duties, he ran the risk of having his goods confiscated and of having to commence again at the humblest duties. If the baker found no substitute he was attached perpetually to his kneading trough. No imperial favor could free him.

This chain attaching the artisan to his trade, light perhaps in the days of prosperity, became insupportable in a period of misery and public calamity. It garroted not alone the baker, but all other alimentary trades, the transporting industries, and, successively, all trades whose exercise seemed necessary to the life of society.

Tramps and men without occupations were pressed and turned over to colleges. Things had changed toward the end of the empire. If under the Antonines the colleges were institutions helping the tradespeople to better their condition, from the fourth century the necessities of the state were substituted for the interest and the rights of the individual. "The college became a prison. From the moment that his industry became attached to a public interest, the artisan was condemned to forced labor."

STATE FACTORIES.

Organized as the state was, with its camps and garrisons all over the known world, a constant supply of arms and clothing, besides food stuffs, was required. The state occupied itself with their procurement by the aid of factories distributed over the empire. Besides the army and the mint, the princes and their courts employed a great number of factories. Jewelry and goldsmithing, precious vases, gold and silver embroidery, and ornaments of various character were turned out here. Women were employed in weaving and making up the stuffs for the

use of the prince and the army. A special transport service was organized for carrying the products of these state industries to their destination. Mr. Levasseur cites a number of these factories in the leading towns of Gaul at the end of the fourth century.

There were three classes of laborers in the state establishments, the free men, the freedmen, and the slaves, to whom a fourth may be added in the condemned criminals. These latter were sent to the mines, the salt works, and the quarries. They carried chains proportioned in weight to the crime they had committed. Their children were subjected to the same servitude. The freedmen, usually men of higher qualification and owing their liberty to special fitness, generally furnished the overseers and superintendents. Free laborers applying for work usually had to show a certificate as to their identity and character.

The discipline in these state workshops was very strict. Negligence was severely punished. Dyers who burned or spotted stuff were even put to death. Workmen were mutually responsible, and paid with their body and money for the fault of others. Serfs of their shops, they could not withdraw. Those engaged in the mines or arms factories were branded. This had not the stamp of infamy, however, that branding bore in the days of the galley slave, because the branding iron was applied to the soldier likewise. As the dress might conceal the mark on the body, the imperial initials were burned into the palm of the hand.

Many fled nevertheless from these hard conditions. Concealment of these fugitives was punishable by heavy fines (from three to five pounds gold — \$600 to \$1,000). In the case of an armorer the person assisting in his escape had to take his place directly or by substituting one of his children. The state workmen and their families were perpetually tied to their servitude. Their immunities were more apparent than real. They were freed from military service, but merely because the state required their service in other directions. The head of an armory after two years of service became exempt, and, toward the close of the period, everyone could free himself who could furnish a substitute.

What made these conditions less unbearable than they would otherwise have been was this, that at the time of the invasions they were shared by all persons connected with the public service — soldiers, functionaries, and municipal officers. The public officer was chained to his charge, the artisan to his trade, the trader to his shop. Every-

one bore his chain and had to be at his post like a sailor in a water-logged craft in danger of sinking, everyone riveted by imperial decree.

We do not meet again in all history a similar social organization. It reminds us of certain systems comprised today under the general name of socialism, which propose to substitute obligatory functions for the freedom of labor in conferring on the state the sovereign power to assign to everyone his part in the general mechanism of production and distribution of wealth.

The exigencies of the state were paramount. The needs of the state absorbed individual self-determination.

THE SYSTEM OF TAXATION.

A brief statement of the taxing system in vogue ought to be introduced here on account of the intimate relation of systems of taxation to the well-being of the working classes. Taxes were both direct and indirect. The chief direct tax bore on land and farm animals, and was assessed by land surveyors every fifteen years. This tax weighed hardest on the *curiales* (members of the curia, the aristocracy) on account of their inability to withdraw from their obligations and because taxes on abandoned lands could be recovered from adjacent lands owned by them. There was a further tax levied on grain for the needs of the army and the administration, to which the contributors had to add a money payment, proportionate to the distance of transportation. The head tax affected those who had no landed property and bore chiefly on the city populations. The lower classes (*plebs*) became exempted under Constantine. The tax subsisted in the country, however, and the landed proprietors were held responsible for the people who lived on their lands.

The *vectigalia* were paid by all commercials and transport merchants. Only the *navicularii* were exempted ; so were all those working for the fisc.

The *chrysargyre* was a tax payable in gold or silver (hence its name) every five years. It was a license tax imposed on all exercising a trade or occupation for gain. The cultivator selling his own produce and the wage-earner alone were exempted. This tax, a trifle to the rich merchant, weighed heavily on the poor artisan who had nothing but his tools to fall back on. Libenius says :

The fisc was pitiless ; some of these unfortunates were reduced to selling their children as slaves, and it is said that at the time when the *chrysargyre* became due the cities were filled with the cries and lamentations of the poor subject to it.

Augustus imposed a license tax. Though only of 1 per cent., distributed over all the provinces and comprehending everything that was sold in the markets and at public auction, it yielded an ample revenue. He had intended this revenue for the supply of the army. When the needs, however, became greater than he had anticipated, he suggested a legacy and inheritance tax of 5 per cent. "But the nobles of Rome were more tenacious of property than of freedom," says Gibbon, and they acquiesced only when Augustus hinted at the substitution of a general land tax.

The indirect taxes were the import and export duties, the toll on bridges and certain roads, and the octroi of cities. Gaul, maintaining an active trade by sea and over the Alps with Italy, had a well-organized administrative service at Lyons and other commercial places. The rate of the import duties varies. The lightest one noted is 2½ per cent., and the heaviest duty imposed, toward the end of the empire, is 12½ per cent. All merchandise was subject to the tax. Frauds were punished by confiscation of the goods. The goods were sold at public auction and usually bought back by the owner. The octroi was imposed for the service of cities. Marseilles, Coblenz, and Cologne have shown traces of the existence of this tax. It required imperial permission to establish it. But toward the end of the empire the imperial treasury absorbed two-thirds of the octroi to its own use and left only one-third of it for the service of the city.

THE CONDITIONS AT THE END OF THE ROMAN PERIOD.

Industry toward the close of the empire had made considerable progress. The houses and country seats of the rich were abodes of luxury. Their manner of living, at least in the south of France, was modeled on that of the wealthy Romans.

The status of the lower classes has been sufficiently delineated above to permit of a brief mention in concluding this review of the Roman period in Gaul. Mr. Levasseur shows that the number of slaves had decreased and that their condition had probably improved on that account. Attached to the personal service of the owner or employed in commerce or in industry, they probably received little in excess of their food, shelter, and clothing. They were under the protection of the law, however, against cruel masters. In the country they were subjected to harder treatment. Here they were employed in all the agricultural occupations and industrial productions for the service of the farm as well as for sale.

The free city laborers working for hire were not very numerous. Outside of the state factories there were no large concentrations of industrial laborers, in any one place. There were only small shopkeepers, at best working with a few assistants. The number of merchants and tradespeople working in their shops was probably larger than the number of helpers, companions. The census of Germany for 1882 showed 7,340,789 persons employed in industries and commerce; of these, 4,878,978 worked in groups of less than five persons. These worked in 2,908,294 establishments, giving to each establishment $1.67 +$ persons. In France the percentage is perhaps larger yet, as it is more a country of small industries and trade in small shops.

The Roman disdain of manual labor penetrated into Gaul. *Curiales* who had married daughters of *coloni* or slaves were reminded by a law of Majorian, in the fifth century, of their risks. The wives and daughters were held to service on the land of the master. The sons, however, followed the state of their father in the cities, with the distinction that if born of a *colon* mother they were admitted to a curia, and if of a slave mother they became members of a college.

There were, however, men of low extraction admitted to highest places. The father of Pertinax was a merchant, and of Maximus a carriage-maker, while Marius, an emperor for a brief period, was an armorer. The legions raised their favorites to the imperial dignity, regardless of the sentiments their actions evoked in the breast of the citizens of *sacratissimae urbis*.

WAGES, MONEY, AND PRICES.

The narrative would lack in one of the essentials did we not become informed of the rate of wages and the cost of subsistence. The status of the workingman must at all times find its expression in his earnings and in the conveniences of life he is able to purchase in exchange of them. The period we are dealing with is peculiarly fortunate in the possession of a document which throws a clear light on this interesting question. Incited, as he declares, by the suffering caused by the fluctuating and extreme prices of all commodities in the Roman empire, of advanced buying and speculative cornering of articles of consumption, Diocletian in the year 302 issued his celebrated edict accompanied by a tariff of maximal prices, covering over 1,000 articles. We find here represented everything needful for the maintenance of life—articles of clothing, food and drink, tools, wages, salaries paid to workmen as well as to artists and teachers. This maximum tariff

was enforced by the edict at the pain of death. But it was soon discovered that traders rather dared the Draconian penalties threatened by the edict than act counter to their interests and the exigencies of the market, and the edict was revoked.

Mr. Levasseur in his first edition of his *Histoire des classes ouvrières* (1859) and in *Question de l'or* (1858) explains the reign of high prices, which called forth the interference of Diocletian, by a convenient blanket clause, borrowed from the money-quantity theory. The stores of gold and silver had not diminished, but in the general insecurity which prevailed all over the empire production at the old rate had ceased, and merchandise had become so scarce that the rise of prices occurred which the emperors vainly battled to repress. Now, the era of Diocletian was prosperous and peaceful, and we can see no reason why Adam should have ceased to delve and Eve to spin any more under Diocletian than under the Antonines, propitious as these reigns were.

William Jacob in his *History of the Production and Consumption of the Precious Metals*, published in 1831, though himself an adherent of the money-quantity theory (and who among the economists up to the time of Tooke was not?), gives a more reasonable explanation of the price phenomenon. It is based on facts of a substantial nature. It may serve a double purpose to quote his statement, as political economists to this day are still inclined to view the economic world as a conception of the mind and to treat the science of wealth more as a field for deductive reasoning than of investigation into historical facts and measurable quantities. Jacob says :

During the greater part of the period the practice of debasing the coin had been extending. In the cabinets of medals are to be seen many cased with a thin coat of silver over copper or brass. If this practice did not begin with Commodus, which has been asserted, it prevailed while Didius Julianus, who bought the imperial dignity at auction a few years after him, retained his transient power. The money of Caracalla is found to have more than half of it in base metal, that of Alexander Severus contains two-thirds of copper, and that coined under Gallienus exhibits only brass washed with silver. The zeal of Mr. Vascovali and Mr. Wm. Banks has recently furnished the world with an edict containing a very copious tariff of prices which has been discovered at two different parts of the Roman empire. These the learned Colonel Leake has ascertained to have been of the reign of the emperor Diocletian in the year 302, which followed a few years after the great debasement of the coin under the reign of Caracalla, Alexander Severus, and Gallienus.

Thus we see cause and effect put in connection, leaving no doubt as to the real cause of the extraordinarily high prices of which the edict speaks. If there were any doubts left as to the value of this money, they were dispelled by a discovery made in 1885, at Elateia, of a fragment of a table on which the character of the debasement was plainly stated. It is here proved that the pound of fine gold was equal to 50,000 denars. This, according to Mommsen, and further demonstrated by Bluemner, makes the gold pound of 337.45 grams equal to 919.59 marks (\$218.86), which reduces the denar to 0.449 cents of our money. The silver denar as first coined in 269 B. C. was about equal to the Attic drachma. It weighed 4.55 grams, worth in our money and mint value 20.47 cents. In Nero's time it had become reduced to 3.90 grams and was worth only 17.55 cents. Mr. Levasseur adopts the valuation of the Elateian table and places the Diocletian denarius at 2.25 centimes (0.434 cents), which is a trifle below Mommsen's and Bluemner's computation. But he takes the Roman pound as equal to 327.45 grams (the correct weight). Mr. Levasseur turns the prices of the Diocletian tariff into French money on this basis of 2.25 centimes per denar. He performs a convenient service to the reader which is not a little enhanced by his reducing Roman weights and measures to the basis of the metric system.¹

Taking some of the leading industries, the wages per day were as follows: Agricultural labor, 56 centimes (11 cents); house carpenter, molder, lime-burner, wheelwright, river-boat builder, smith, baker, river-boat man, fr. 1.125 (21.6 cents); naval-boat builders, sailors, mosaic- and marble-workers, fr. 1.35 (26 cents); house painters, fr. 1.575 (30½ cents); statuary molders in terra cotta, fr. 1.687 (32½ cents); and decorative painters, fr. 3.375 (64 cents). All these wages were supplemented by board. The inquiry of the French government of 1792 showed that the non-boarded agricultural laborer received about double the rate paid the boarded laborer. Hence Mr. Levasseur feels justified in assuming that in classic times the unboarded workmen received pay at the same ratio of increase.²

But, according to the edict, workmen were paid also by the task and

¹ In transcribing the figures supplied to us by French writers into American money, weights, and measures, I am taking the franc at 19.3 cents, the kilogram at 2.2 pounds, and the hectoliter at 2 5-6 bushels, and the liter as equal to a quart.

² In the statements of wages from the inquiry of 1792 I find the rates of non-boarded laborers in different places and industries from 8 to 14 cents higher than of the boarded laborers. This gives an average equal to an agricultural laborer's wages in Roman times as an addition to a non-boarded workman's pay.

by the month. Those paid by the day are held to produce a certain quantity of work. The wool-shearer (boarded) received 8 cents per sheep. The brickmaker received 8 cents for two or eight bricks according to size. He was boarded, but had to furnish the materials. Workers in wool, silk, and gold were also boarded and were paid according to the weight of the materials they consumed in their work, and at rates conforming to the quality of the work. The embroiderer, working at his home, was also paid by weight, which was probably ascertained by weighing the object before beginning and after completing the work. The weaver was dealt with in the same fashion. He had his loom probably at his home, where also most of the piece workers, who were rather artisans than simple workmen, kept their tools.

The means of subsistence were cheaper than in our days, though not so very different from a hundred years ago. The Diocletian tariff gives the following as the maximum price: millet per hectoliter, fr. 2.30 (16 cents the bushel); rye, beans, and peas, fr. 4.12 (29 cents a bushel); flour of millet, peas, or beans, fr. 6.88 (48 cents a bushel). Under the rude processes of the times the work of turning grain into flour was frequently more expensive than the grain from which it was derived.

Vegetables seem to have been very cheap. Five artichokes cost $22\frac{1}{2}$ centimes ($4\frac{1}{2}$ cents); five heads of lettuce of best or ten of second quality were 9 centimes ($1\frac{3}{4}$ cents); two large or four small melons, the same price; so were held one hundred chestnuts, thirty yellow plums, twenty-five figs, eight olives, twenty-five small dates of second or eight dates of first quality. Some fruit was sold by measure, as for instance cherries and mulberries at 1 centime, or 1-5 cent, the liter, and garlic at 16 centimes, or 3 cents, the liter. Oil according to quality was from 11 to 36 cents the liter; salt, 26 centimes (5 cents); goat milk, 34 centimes ($6\frac{3}{4}$ cents); fresh cheese, $6\frac{1}{2}$ cents the liter, and dry cheese, 85 centimes the kilo ($7\frac{1}{2}$ cents the pound).

The price of beef was set down at 62 centimes the kilo (6 cents the pound); of pork, at 93 centimes ($8\frac{1}{2}$ cents the pound); of sausage, at 71 centimes to fr. 1.08 (6 to 9 cents). A pair of chickens was fr. 1.35 (26 cents); a pheasant, fr. 2.82, and a fattened one, fr. 5.64 (55 cents and \$1.10). Sea fish of first quality was valued at $14\frac{1}{2}$ cents the pound and of second grade at 10 cents; fresh-water fish, at $7\frac{1}{2}$ cents and 5 cents the pound, and salt fish at $3\frac{1}{2}$ cents the pound. A hundred oysters was fr. 2.25 ($43\frac{1}{2}$ cents). Country wine was rated at 3 to

6½ cents the liter, and of better quality (Falernian and Sabine), fr. 1.26; beer (*cervoise*), 17 centimes, or 3½ cents, the liter. Ordinary clothing, shoes, and sandals for common use were in keeping with the prices above noted.

Clothing and its materials for the use of the wealthy were much higher. Dalmaticas were rated as high as fr. 200. The kilogram of raw silk was fr. 687 (\$60 the pound), but silk dyed purple was worth fr. 10,305, equal to \$1,097 the pound. Reduced to their equivalents in gold value, prices were probably not very different from what they had been when sound money circulated. It seems, however, that Diocletian wanted to prevent prices going beyond a maximum. Whatever his motives in establishing this maximum, he must have been guided by what was considered then a fair average of prices. But he did not give full attention to the influence of a debased currency on prices. This, however, must not be laid very severely to his charge, considering the French attempts in the closing decade of the eighteenth century, and those of the American lawmakers in the seventh decade of the nineteenth. The chief cause of failure lay in the attempt at establishing a universal price that was to govern in Alexandria and Paris, in London and in Rome, in the country town and in the metropolis.

But whatever the relation of prices of the edict in the different markets of the empire, or to other periods of imperial Rome, the important point in view, the existing relation of wages to prices does not suffer any infraction.

Confining ourselves to the wages of an agricultural laborer, as the base of all occupations in an agricultural state—and this imperial Rome had not ceased to be any more than France had in 1792—we gather the following: The day wage of this laborer was 11 cents with food, and for non-nourished laborers, probably double that, or 22 cents. He could buy for this 22 cents under the tariff that fixed his wage 1⅓ bushels of millet, or ¾ bushel of rye, beans, or peas; or 3⅔ lbs. of beef and other meats proportionate to prices quoted above. The inferior grains named were cheap enough to allow him to lay out his wages so that he could get a liberal supply of bread and fruit, besides vegetables, fruit, oil, salt, and other condiments. Even meat would not have been excluded from his bill of fare, with proper distribution of expenses.

In the year 1793 the National Assembly ordered an inquiry into the rate of wages and the prices of commodities. The period to be

covered was the year 1790, as not yet influenced by the succeeding events, which had a very disturbing effect upon price relations. Mr. Leon Biollay gives us the results of this inquiry, and of a subsequent one, that of the year III of the republic, in his work *Les Prix en 1790*. It will be of value to the student of economics to compare these prices and wages with those ruling fifteen centuries before. The average wage of labor in agricultural districts was about 20 sous (20 cents). It varied between 13 sous in the northeast and 24 sous 6d. in the southeast, for laborers finding themselves. The price of board was reckoned at from 6 sous to 12 sous in the different regions, varying in conformity with the rate of wages. City wages for common labor were but a few cents higher than the ruling country wages, and averaged but 24 cents for the nine geographical sections of France.

The average rate for artisans (carpenters, masons, locksmiths, blacksmiths, and weavers) is a little over 30 cents. The agricultural laborer in the Roman empire, oppressed as he was, was paid as well as his descendant at the time of the Revolution. It is doubtful whether the *bagaud* of A. D. 302 could have been a more degraded being than the French peasant of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries was.

Allowing 10 cents for board, as the rate of wages as given for Rome is for labor "found" and that for France is taken as not "found," then we find the lowest-paid Roman labor as high as the French of similar condition, and that of more skilled workmen about 20 per cent. higher than the French average for artisans. Nor must it be supposed that the French rate of wages was exceptionally low, though some 25 per cent. lower than English wages, taking my figures from Arthur Young and Sir Frederick Eden. They were much above those ruling in Germany. In an address by Alfred Krupp, father of the late owner, to his workmen, he refers to the early struggles of the concern and states the wages paid in 1827 to smiths and casting-house men as one thaler and fifteen groschen per week after an advance in wages had been granted (\$1.05 cents = 17½ cents a day).

So far as wages are concerned, the situation had not improved in fifteen centuries. So far as wages are expressed in grain prices, the situation was infinitely worse. The year 1790 was a dear one, under the disturbing influence of political unrest, as Mr. Biollay says. The price per quintal is 9fr. 12s. 5d. This is equal to 89 cents per bushel. But the average of the decade 1781-90 was by no means a low one, according to the extensive researches of Mr. d'Avenel. The

ten-year average per hectoliter at 11 fr. gives us 75 cents per bushel for rye, and 8 fr. or 54 cents per bushel for barley, also an article of considerable consumption in the economy of the poor in the past. Averaging the two, we have still the price fully twice as high as in Diocletian's maximal tariff. Rye flour was $2\frac{1}{4}$ cents the pound (2s. 3d.) against 48 cents the bushel in ancient Rome for a lower quality of flour, millet, and beans. At the same rate of price increase for turning grain into flour, rye flour would have stood nearly 1 cent the pound lower in the Roman price list. Oats were $14\frac{1}{2}$ cents the bushel in 302, and averaged $33\frac{3}{4}$ cents for the decade 1781-90. The price of meat was not very different, though somewhat lower in ancient Rome. Beef averaged about $7\frac{1}{2}$ cents, and pork $9\frac{1}{2}$ cents, including local taxes. (Roman price, 6 cents for the former, and $8\frac{1}{2}$ cents for the latter.)

I shall give here some prices of articles of consumption along with the Roman prices.

PRICES¹ OF COMMODITIES IN 302 AND IN 1790.

	Prices 1790.	Prices 302.		Prices 1790.	Prices 302.
Oats, bushel.....	$33\frac{3}{4}$ cts.	$14\frac{1}{2}$ cts.	Melons	2	$\frac{7}{8}$ to $1\frac{3}{4}$
Rye, bushel.....	70	29	Figs, twenty-five..	$2\frac{1}{4}$ to $4\frac{1}{2}$	$1\frac{3}{4}$
Rye flour, pound...	$2\frac{1}{2}$	$1\frac{3}{4}$	Plums, thirty.....	$\frac{2}{3}$ to $2\frac{3}{4}$	$1\frac{3}{4}$
Beef, pound.....	$7\frac{1}{2}$	6	Olives, eight.....	$2\frac{1}{4}$	$1\frac{3}{4}$
Pork, pound.....	$9\frac{1}{2}$	$8\frac{1}{2}$	Cherries, quart (pound)	1 to $1\frac{1}{2}$	$\frac{7}{8}$
Lard, pound.....	11	$11\frac{1}{2}$	Oil, quart.....	20	11 to 36
Sausage, pound....	10	$6\frac{1}{2}$ to 10	Salt, quart ²	2 to 5	$5\frac{1}{4}$
Chickens, pair.....	22	27	Soft cheese, quart	$6\frac{1}{2}$	$6\frac{1}{2}$
Goose	20	45	Dry cheese, pound.	$6\frac{1}{2}$ to 9	$7\frac{1}{2}$
Goose, fattened....	50	89	Shoes, calfskin, pair.....	77	33 to 67
Fish, river, pound..	10	5 to $7\frac{1}{2}$			
Salt fish, pound....	$3\frac{3}{4}$	$3\frac{1}{2}$			
Oysters, one hundred	5 to 58	44			
Artichokes, five....	5	$4\frac{1}{2}$			
Lettuce, five ac- cording to size..	$2\frac{1}{2}$	$\frac{7}{8}$ to $1\frac{3}{4}$			

The difference in prices is insignificant in all objects for home consumption, or produced for a near-by market. If we could trace the exact nature of articles of wear and usage so as to serve for com-

¹ The varying prices in the column for 1790 stand for different sections of the country. The single prices are the average drawn by Mr. Biollay from the prices of the different sections. In the prices from the Roman period the differing quotations denote differing qualities. For the same quality the Diocletian tariff has a uniform price.

² Lowest quality, 2 cents; fine white salt, 5 cents.

parison, we should probably find a similar approach in prices in the two periods. The shoes worn by the ancients, judging from illustrations from monuments, were not equal to our modern type and lacked in leather and in work expended to make them comparable to the kind worn in Paris in 1790. The maximum fixed by the Paris Commune for calfskin shoes was fr. 4 (77 cents). Shoes for women are rated at fr. 3 to 4 (58 to 77 cents) and for children at fr. 1.10 to 2.10 (21 to 41 cents). The tariff of 302 sets the price for sandals at fr. 1.12 to 1.80 (22 to 35 cents), and for shoes at fr. 1.70 to 3.38 (33 to 65 cents). We may conclude that, if the ancient shoe had been like the modern shoe, made to cover the whole foot, the prices would show considerable approximation.

In contradistinction to the quantity theory of money I endeavored to show in my book *A History of Money and Prices* (1895) that prices are the result of all the elements of cost that enter into the processes of production and distribution, and have little or nothing to do with the accident or incident of the quantity of money in circulation. When wages are not materially different, and the processes of work and the tools employed have not undergone any great changes, and when distribution knows no middlemen, being a direct transaction between producer and consumer, then prices in different periods naturally will not show very great variations.

The great discrepancy which we meet in grain prices cannot be offered in proof against this theory. Here many factors generally overlooked by economists when dealing with prices, come into play, which bear on the most important commodity with greater force than on any other, although differences in prices between one period and another are all credited to the accident of money quantities in circulation, be this difference in quantity real or fancied. To prove this we have to take a brief retrospect over conditions in the Roman empire. In its decline the burdens of taxation bore heavier and heavier. The requirements of the state became larger and the contributors became fewer. But up to near the end of the fourth century of the Christian era the conditions were all favorable in comparison with the hopeless conditions under which the French peasantry labored in the time preceding the Revolution.

Neither could the rapacity of the provincial governors have as far-reaching an effect as the collective oppressions wrought by the farmers of the revenue, the feudal lords, and the clergy, the two latter classes not only living on the peasantry, but themselves exempt from con-

tributing to the burdens of the kingdom. When not yet marred by the destructive incursions of the barbarians, the Roman world lived in peace and security. The central government watched the welfare of the people with commendable solicitude, as is attested by the eloquent language of the monuments.

Asia to the mouth of the Euphrates in the hands of the Turks is nothing better than a desert. "Under the reigns of the Cæsars the proper Asia contained five hundred populous cities enriched with all the gifts of nature, and adorned with all the refinements of art" (Gibbon, *History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*). Northern Africa had been covered by hundreds of populous cities. Travelers on courses of discovery continually come upon ruins of large towns in the desert regions of Asia and Africa. "The aqueducts in their bold and massive construction explain to the beholder whence these cities derived their populousness and possibility of existence." Remnants of them and of aquatic engineering for purposes of irrigation everywhere show after fifteen hundred years the traces of Rome's occupation. The art of husbandry was greatly promoted. The use of artificial grasses, prominently lucern (alfalfa), became familiar to the farmers of Italy and the provinces and "assured a supply of wholesome and plentiful food for the cattle during winter, multiplied the number of flocks and herds, which in their turn contributed to the fertility of the soil." Columella describes the advanced state of Spanish husbandry under the reign of Tiberius; "and it may be observed," says Gibbon, "that these famines which so frequently afflicted the infant republic were seldom or never experienced by the extensive empire of Rome. The accidental scarcity, in any single province, was immediately relieved by the plenty of the more fortunate neighbors." We have seen above what care the imperial government bestowed on the carriage and distribution of the products of the soil.

The splendid roads which traversed the empire and connected the Forum of Rome with the towns of the provinces made it possible for commerce to unite in intercommunication the remotest parts with the center. Neither mountains nor streams were permitted to separate city and city. Mountains were perforated and bold arches thrown over the broadest and most rapid streams. The solid construction of the Roman highways has not entirely yielded to the effort of fifteen centuries. (Gibbon.)

Under conditions such as these trade could prosper and products from a distance could be carried to the needy consumer at a minimum of expense and risk. The strong hand of government strained its

power in all branches of economic activity to one end, namely, the providing of the people with an unhindered and complete supply of the means of subsistence.

Arthur Young, traveling in France in 1789, frequently remarks on the splendid condition of the roads. But he is struck by the remarkable fact that they are almost entirely unused for traffic. In one place he tells us that, traveling thirty-six miles in a certain direction, he is met by only one cabriolet, half a dozen carts, and a few peasant women leading their donkeys. The excellent roads were not a sign of prosperity, but of a cruel oppression, the *corvée* most heavily weighing on the peasant. Forced to leave his work often at most critical periods, his ruin was not infrequently the price paid for the existence of public works not at all demanded by public necessity, but by the caprice and vanity of governing officials. Apart from a system of taxation which put most of the burdens on his shoulders and exempted those most able to contribute to the public treasure, his sacrifices in time and labor for the benefit of the feudal lord were most destructive to his fortunes. Besides the fixed charges laid upon him he was liable to be called at any time from his own work to that of the lord of the manor. When his horses were most needed for the cultivation of his own land, he might be called upon to do some carting for the chateau. His growing crops might be destroyed by the game kept in large numbers in the neighboring forests. But woe to him if he should be found in the act of killing or even injuring these his natural enemies. He was sent to the galleys for the crime of trying to preserve the growing food supply of his family. He was prohibited from weeding the acre and giving it a second turning so as not to disturb the partridge. Likewise was an interdict put on manuring with night soil. The reason given is that the flesh of the game feeding on the grains growing therefrom might retain a taste from it. The reading of the *Cahiers* submitting these accumulated grievances to the consideration of the Assembly, many of them prepared by members of the nobility, impress one with doubt of the sanity of the government and the governing classes. The government had at various times endeavored to mitigate by ordinances the most crying of the evils. But the local powers were present, and the government was far away. Turgot's reforms were abolished almost as soon as promulgated or died of inanition for want of support. Those charged with their execution were mostly those who benefited by the abuses under which the country hastened toward its destruction. But this did not cover all the difference between the

two periods. Traffic was free in the Roman empire from Syria to the columns of Hercules, from the mouth of the Euphrates to the Caledonian wall. No custom barriers intervened between country and country. A duty, varying for different times between $2\frac{1}{2}$ and $12\frac{1}{2}$ per cent., was paid once at the place of destination. Traffic in France, on the contrary, was not only hampered by provincial custom-houses, but by similar barriers erected by cities and towns, not to speak of the tolls on roads and bridges and river dues. The effect on trade of all these exactions and regulations by officials whose hands were always open, can be judged from a consideration of imports and exports. These amounted for the present limits of France (*i. e.*, exclusive of Alsace-Lorraine and the Antilles) to 349 million francs in exports and 310 million francs in imports. Contraband trade was active at the frontiers, however, and more than balanced the difference between the above figures. Cruel penalties, the galleys and the gibbet, threatened the captured smuggler. But these menaces were not able to influence a people whose choice lay frequently between the slow death of starvation and the risk of apprehension. The apprehending powers were not inaccessible to argument which received weight and support from the illegitimate traffic the culprits conducted under the very eyes of these officials. Low as the sums representing the foreign trade of France were at the time of the Revolution, they were more than double the values at the end of the reign of Louis XIV. Imports in 1715 amounted to seventy-one million francs, and, at the then rate of the money, 1.67×1 , = fr. 118 millions, and exports to 105 millions, = 170 millions in the money of 1879, according to Moreau des Jonnès.

A country displaying such signs of weakness in agricultural, industrial, and commercial activity was nevertheless forced to contribute in the last year of the ancient régime the sum of 623 millions of francs to the royal exchequer, without counting the immense sums the idle and non-contributive classes, the nobility and clergy, exacted. Under the exhaustive system of cultivation, not differing in any way from that of the Middle Ages, and the hopeless oppression of the peasantry, it is not surprising if every third year was one of scarcity, if not of famine. As I have shown in my book *History of Money and Prices*, there were thirty-four years of scarcity, years in which the earnings of the people were not sufficient to pay for their bread, as Moreau des Jonnès puts it, during the fifty-five years of the active reign of Louis XIV. In the thirty-five years from 1766 to 1800 I have counted but one year of low grain prices, against twelve years in the period from 1669 to 1715, and

thirty-four years of high prices, with the average but 1 franc 85 centimes per hectoliter (13 cents per bushel) below the average of the thirty-four years of scarcity in Louis XIV.'s reign.

The high price of grains, as of all other things, proves their scarcity, and nothing else. Conversely, their low price proves their abundant supply. In the period 1726 to 1750 France (and England showed the same phenomenon) was blessed with propitious seasons and years of low corn prices. The average for wheat was 77 cents, of rye 46 cents, of oats 21 cents, and of barley 40 cents the bushel during this period.

If we compare these with the grain prices quoted from Diocletian's price tariff, we find that they fairly well approximate, and furnish substantial proof of the correctness of my assertion as to the factors active in price-making.

It is needless to add anything to the picture drawn of the state of society and of the working classes in France in the two periods separated by the space of 1,500 years. Whatever the oppression wrought by Rome and its satraps, by the landholder and the tax collector, in its palmier days, it could not reach that under which the country groaned at the time of the downfall of the French monarchy. Besides, the more modern period was wanting in all the benefits and advantages spread over the world by the ministering hand of the empire, under which all nations living under its scepter enjoyed the fruits of peace in a prosperity which they were not to see again, after its downfall, until many a year of the nineteenth century should have passed.

JACOB SCHOENHOF.

NEW YORK.